

PRIME NEWS

PM opens first agro mini-market

WELFARE: It'll lower dependence on middlemen, boost income of traders, says Najib

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said more outlets would be opened to help farmers, fishermen, livestock breeders and small manufacturers sell their produce and other products at

a lower price to consumers.

He said the 1Malaysia People's Agrobazaar was to help the people face the rising cost of living and reduce their dependence on middlemen.

"This is another effort to improve the people's welfare after the success of Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M), Klinik Rakyat 1Malaysia and 1Malaysia People's Housing projects.

"More such projects will be implemented under the 11th Malaysia Plan," he said when opening the first 1Malaysia People's Agrobazaar in Indera Mahkota here yesterday.

Adopting a mini-market concept, the agrobazaar offers 40 per cent fresh produce and 60 per cent agriculture-based products that are mostly supplied by local farmers

and small manufacturers here.

Najib said such agrobazaars allowed suppliers to sell their products straight to the people.

"Farmers, fishermen and livestock breeders want bigger market and reasonable prices for their produce. It can be achieved if we do not have middlemen who are profiteering too much."

He congratulated the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry on its effort to reduce the role of middlemen.

"If we can control the supply chain, we may reduce the prices further. We must also have more ef-

ficient logistics to ensure that the produce and goods from suppliers could reach consumers at a lower cost."

Najib said such initiatives would boost the income of farmers, fishermen, livestock breeders and small manufacturers, as well as help the people get supplies at a reasonable price.

He said the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax would benefit the rural people as the government would have more funds to help them.

Earlier, Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri

Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the ministry targeted 600 1Malaysia People's Agrobazaars by 2020, with the first 50 units ready this year.

Unlike KR1M, he said, the agrobazaars would be owned by the locals in the rural and suburban areas, who would be trained to operate the premises effectively.

The agrobazaar sells 2,000 produce and agriculture-based products, with their prices between five and 20 per cent lower than other outlets. It has a special counter for Agrobank where the people can perform small transactions and pay bills.



Prime Minister **Datuk Seri Najib Razak** visiting the 1Malaysia People's Agrobazaar in Indera Mahkota, Kuantan, yesterday. With him is Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister **Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob** (third from left). Pic by Luqman Hakim Zubir